

Strode's Grist Mill
Southeast corner of State Route 52-100 (Lenape Road)
and Birmingham Road (LR 15087)
Sconnelltown Vicinity (East Bradford Township)
Chester County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-251

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-251

STRODE'S GRIST MILL

Street Address or Location: Southeast corner of junction between State Route #52 and County Road #15087, East Bradford Township, Chester County, Pa. (Reference: Map of Chester County [by County Commissioners] 1956)

Present Owner: Mrs. Susan L. Williamson, West Chester R.D. #5, Pa.

Brief Statement of Significance: This old grist mill dates from 1721 and has been in almost continuous operation since its erection.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: George Strode bought 236 acres in East Bradford Township in 1715 and the mill property descended from him to his son John, to his son Richard, to his son Joseph, to his son Caleb Strode, who in 1853 sold it to Thomas P. Hawley, who sold it in 1857 to Franklin Cox, who sold it in 1868 to Marshall Strode, whose son A. Darlington sold it in 1893 to Joseph W. Worrel, whose sons sold it in 1915 to John S. Garrett. Garrett sold the property in 1918 to Jesse D. Gilbert, who sold it in 1919 to John White, who sold it in 1920 to Charles Forquer, who sold it in 1924 to J. C. Etters, who sold it in 1941 to the Misses Sharpless, who sold it in 1946 to W. C. Baldwin, who sold it in 1948 to W. A. Garriss, who sold it in 1950 to the above-named owner (Mrs. Susan L. Williamson).
2. Date of erection: Stone in the quoining of the south wall, near the east end, has the date "1721" cut into the stone.
3. Architect, builder, suppliers, etc.: Unknown
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: Laid out as a grist mill and in almost continuous operation, still being used with electric power instead of water. Old sets of French burr stones are still in use, and the plan of the mill seems little changed. The size of the building now is the same as in 1798 in the Direct Tax, Department of Internal Revenue.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: Frame addition to the west is new, and office and entry to the north is twentieth century. The pent eaves on the east side have rotted off in the last fifteen years.
6. Important old views and references:
Views: Chester County Historical Society has numerous late nineteenth century views up to the present.

References: Sources of information all to be found in the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pa., in classified printed and manuscript files under heading: East Bradford Township. Business Houses.

James Strode Elston: Strode and Stroud families in England and America. Tuttle Publishing Co., Rutland, Vermont, 1949.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: Strode family came from Milbrook parish, Southampton, England. George Strode purchased land in East Bradford Township, Chester County, in 1715 and the mill was built in 1721. It was, in all probability, operated as a company mill for a few years. It descended through these names in the Strode family: George Strode, John Strode, Richard Strode, Joseph Strode, Caleb Strode, Marshall Strode.

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: None known

D. Supplemental Material: Direct quotation from the following -

1. "Daily Local News," West Chester, Pa., October 12, 1880:

"PUBLIC SALE OF VALUABLE REAL ESTATE.- In pursuance of an order of the Orphans' Court of Chester, Pennsylvania, will be sold at public sale on the premises in East Bradford township, in said county, on the 28TH DAY OF OCTOBER, A.D. 1880, the following described real estate, late of Marshal Strode, dec'd, to wit:

"Tract No. 1. All that valuable messuage Grist and Saw Mill and tract of land situate in the township aforesaid, known as 'Strode's Mill,' bounded by lands of the estate of Philip Paxson, deceased, and others, containing EIGHT ACRES OF LAND, more or less. The improvements upon said property consist of a good, substantial FRAME DWELLING HOUSE, STABLE and out buildings. Also, a first-class Stone Grist Saw and Plaster Mill, with Cider Press attached. The mill is in good running order, is excellently located, with a fine water power - head and fall about twenty-two feet. Is one of the oldest and best established mill sites in Chester county, where an extensive business has been conducted for almost a century.

"Tract No. 2 adjoins tract No. 1, the mill site containing FOUR AND THREE-QUARTERS ACRES of Land, more or less. The improvements consist of A FINE SERPENTINE STONE DWELLING HOUSE, containing twelve rooms. The house is supplied with running water, is built in modern style, containing bath room and all other conveniences, is enclosed in a fine lawn well shaded with choice trees. GOOD STONE BARN, with Wagon House attached, and all the necessary out buildings. Convenient to the house is a fine spring house over a never-failing spring of good water.

"Both of these properties are located on the road leading from Lenape Station on the Wilmington and Northern Railroad to West Chester, about 1-1/2 miles from the former place and 2-1/2 miles from the latter, are convenient to all places of business and for health, comfort, business and good neighborhood cannot be surpassed.

"Any one desiring a beautiful home and the comforts of life could not find a more desirable property than Tract No. 2, with its highly cultivated ground, substantial buildings, fine lawn, choice shade trees and beautiful surroundings. With these advantages it should commend itself to any one desiring a good home or fine summer residence.

"Persons desiring to see the property or ask for further information concerning the same will please call upon or address the undersigned. Sale to commence at 1 o'clock p.m., when conditions will be made known by

"A. DARLINGTON STRODE,

"R. HARRY STRODE.

"Administrators of Marshall Strode, deceased,

"Jas. E. McFarlan, auct. West Chester."

Prepared by Bart Anderson - August 1958

Curator, Chester County Historical Society

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This mill has architectural interest because it has an early date, 1721, and has been in almost continuous operation since its construction with most of the original machinery preserved.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: About 30' by 58'. The south side has 2-1/2 stories, plus a nearly clear basement above ground.
2. Foundations: Stone
3. Wall construction: Stone
4. Chimneys: In original place south
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Mostly original
 - b. Windows and shutters: Mostly original - no shutters
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Medium pitch - tin
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Original rafters exposed
 - c. Dormers: None

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans: Very large mill, still in use, with what seems to be the original floor plan.
2. Stairways: In original places, though probably replaced.
3. Flooring: Mostly old.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Rough
5. Doorways and doors: Original places, though mostly new material.
6. Trim: Little ever there
7. Hardware: Little there
8. Lighting: Nothing old
9. Heating: No information

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Built very close to the road on the north and east sides, with entrances on both of these sides.
2. Enclosures: None
3. Outbuildings: Miller's house and other buildings standing nearby; not property of same owner.
4. Walks: None
5. Landscaping: None

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